

Application No. 09/391,943  
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

New independent claim 40 has been added to clarify the feature of the present invention whereby a reproducing environment converting unit combines a plurality of images of an object which are taken by an image input apparatus under a plurality of respective environments, to convert the image of the object into an observation image according to an environment in which the observation image of the object is to be observed, based on: (i) photographing environment information acquired at a photographing time at which the object is photographed with the image input apparatus, (ii) observing environment information acquired at an observing time at which the observation image of the object is observed, and (iii) object feel-of-material information regarding texture of the object, wherein the object feel-of material information is acquired from the plurality of images of the object.

In addition, new independent claim 65 has been added to clarify the feature of the present invention whereby a reproducing environment variable image data producing unit combines a plurality of images of the object taken under a

Application No. 09/391,943  
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

respective plurality of environments to produce reproducing environment variable image data based on: (i) photographing environment information acquired at a photographing time at which the object is photographed by the image input apparatus, and (ii) object feel-of-material information regarding a texture of the object, wherein the object feel-of material information is acquired from the plurality of images of the object.

Still further, new independent method claims 67 and 68 have been added based on new claims 40 and 65, respectively, and new dependent claims 41-64, 66 and 69 have been added to recite various additional features of the present invention depending from new independent claims 40, 65 and 68, respectively.

It is respectfully submitted that new claims 40-69 are all clearly supported by the disclosure in the specification and drawings, and that no new matter has been added.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that new claims 40-69 be approved and entered.

CLAIM FEE

The application now contains 20 claims, of which 4 are independent. Accordingly, a claim fee in the amount of \$88.00 for the addition of 1 independent claim in excess of 3 is attached hereto. In addition, authorization is hereby given to

Application No. 09/391,943  
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

charge any additional fees which may be determined to be required to Account No. 06-1378.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1, 2, 10, 14, 28-30, 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of JP 09-172649 ("Ooyama et al") and USP 6,240,204 ("Hidaka et al"). These rejections are respectfully traversed with respect to new claims 40-69 set forth hereinabove.

According to the present invention as recited in new independent claim 40 (and corresponding method claim 67), the reproducing environment converting unit combines a plurality of images of the object which are taken by the image input apparatus under a plurality of respective environments, to convert the image of the object into an observation image according to an environment in which the observation image of the object is to be observed. The conversion is based on: (i) photographing environment information acquired at a photographing time at which the object is photographed with the image input apparatus, (ii) observing environment information acquired at an observing time at which the observation image of the object is observed, and (iii) object feel-of-material information regarding texture of the object, wherein the object feel-of material information is acquired from the plurality of images of the object.

Application No. 09/391,943  
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

In addition, according to the present invention as recited in new independent claim 65 (and corresponding method claim 68), the reproducing environment variable image data producing unit combines a plurality of images of the object taken under a respective plurality of environments to produce reproducing environment variable image data based on: (i) photographing environment information acquired at a photographing time at which the object is photographed by the image input apparatus, and (ii) object feel-of-material information regarding a texture of the object, wherein the object feel-of material information is acquired from the plurality of images of the object.

As acknowledged by the Examiner on page 5 of the Office Action, Ooyama et al does not disclose measuring object feel-of-material information. For this reason, the Examiner has cited Hidaka et al to supply the missing teaching of Ooyama et al.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that Hidaka merely discloses measuring an observation angle as part of an observed color correction system. And it is respectfully submitted that Hidaka et al is merely directed toward a color correction system for use with a copy/scanner machine.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Hidaka et al does not disclose, teach or suggest taking a plurality of images of an object under a respective plurality of environments, and combining the plurality of images to convert an image of the

Application No. 09/391,943  
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

object into an observation image or to produce reproducing environment variable image data based on object feel-of-material information regarding a texture of the object, acquired from the plurality of images of the object.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that even if Ooyama et al and Hidaka et al were combinable in the manner suggested by the Examiner, the above described claimed features of the present invention as recited in each of new independent claims 40, 65, 67 and 68 would still not be achieved or rendered obvious.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new independent claims 40, 65, 67 and 68, as well as new claims 41-64, 66 and 69 respectively depending therefrom, all patentably distinguish over the combination of Ooyama et al and Hidaka et al, under 35 USC 103.

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In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

Application No. 09/391,943  
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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